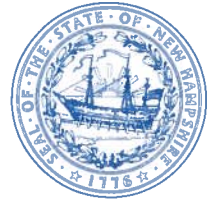




The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

February 3, 2016

The Honorable Jeb Bradley, Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB374, AN ACT *requiring the office of energy and planning to update coastal flooding trends.*

Dear Chairman Bradley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB374. This bill would require the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to update coastal flooding trends, at least every 5 years, commencing July 1, 2019. NHDES supports this bill but requests a minor amendment to the title to replace office of energy and planning with NHDES.

The New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission (Commission), of which NHDES is a member, was enacted on July 2, 2013 by the Legislature and was required to consider key scientific research on current and future coastal risks and hazards. The Commission created a Scientific Advisory Panel (Panel) to review available scientific information about coastal hazards and flood risks in New Hampshire. The Panel analyzed the latest published data on historic trends and developed projections for the years 2050 and 2100 for sea-level rise, coastal storms, and extreme precipitation. The Panel's findings were summarized in a peer-reviewed report (see attached for two-page summary of the report). The Commission's draft recommendations include the activity proposed in this bill.

The Panel's report is based on the best available scientific information relevant to the state's coastal flooding trends and its projections will help municipalities and the state prepare for future coastal flooding impacts. In addition, the Panel's report can be considered by federal agencies as a "Climate-informed Science Approach" for federal actions required to comply with the Federal Flood Risk Management Standards. However, in order for New Hampshire to continue to prepare to be more resilient, the Panel's analysis needs to be periodically updated to consider the new scientific information. NHDES supports using the best available science in its decision-making and is fully prepared to serve as the convener for the required report update upon passage of this legislation.

The Honorable Jeb Bradley, Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
February 3, 2016
Page 2

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on SB374. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Steve Couture (steven.couture@NHDES.nh.gov or 603-271-8801) or me (Thomas.burack@NHDES.nh.gov or 603-271-3449).

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

Enclosure

cc: Sponsors of SB 374: Sens. Watters, Stiles, Fuller Clark; Reps. F. Rice, Borden, Cushing

